

Message Text

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42

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 RSR-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /064 W

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R 181040Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1053

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 1064

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET SO

SUBJ: ABSENCE OF ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR

1. SUMMARY: LONG, UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE OF ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR HAS RAISED EYEBROWS HERE AND IS MOST UNFORTUNATE. WOULD SEEM IN ETHIOPIAN (AND US) INTEREST TO GET HIM BACK TO POST.

2. ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR AYALEW MANDEFRO HAS BEEN ABSENT FROM HIS POST HERE SINCE APRIL 25. THIS FOLLOWED LONG LEAVE EARLIER IN YEAR. ACCORDING ETHIOPIANS, IT NOW UNLIKELY HE WILL RETURN IN NEAR FUTURE BECAUSE HE IN ADDIS WORKING ON PREPARATIONS FOR KHARTOUM CONFERENCE WHICH ETHIOPIANS BELIEVE WILL BE HELD IN AUGUST.

3. AYALEW WAS SCHEDULED TO RETURN HERE IN LATE JUNE OR EARLY JULY AND FOR SEVERAL WEEKS ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY MEMBERS MET THE WEEKLY ALITALIA FLIGHT FROM ADDIS ON THIS ASSUMPTION. TO COMPOUND THE PROBLEM, TIBABU BEKELE, FIRST SECRETARY WHO WAS CHARGE, DEPARTED MOGADISCIO IN EARLY JULY AND IS NOT EXPECTED TO RETURN. EMBASSY NOW IN CHARGE OF FIRST SECRETARY REDWAN ABDALLA. LATTER IS ARABIC-SPEAKING MUSLIM FROM HARAR WHO HAS NO CONTACT WITH HIGH-LEVEL SOMALI OFFICIALS AND WHO INTELLIGENCE FUNCTION IN ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY PROBABLY KNOWN TO GSDR.

4. FACT THAT AMBASSADOR AYALEW HAS NOT RETURNED IS WIDELY INTERPRETED HERE AS INDICATION OF IEG DISPLEASURE WITH SOMALI
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TACTICS REGARDING TERRITORIAL DISPUTE PARTICULARLY AT RECENT

OAU SUMMIT.

5. FROM ETHIOPIAN AND US STANDPOINT, PRESENT ETHIOPIAN REPRESENTATION HERE IS MOST UNFORTUNATE. AYALEW HAS EXTREMELY WIDE AND DEEP RELATIONSHIPS WITH SOMALI ESTABLISHMENT. MORE IMPORTANT, HE HAS ACCESS TO PRESIDENT SIAD AND THE TWO RESPECT EACH OTHER AND COMMUNICATE FRANKLY AND FREELY. HE HAS PLAYED IMPORTANT PERSONAL ROLE IN FACILITATING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ADDIS AND MOGADISCIO. IT WOULD SEEM THAT AYALEW'S PRESENCE HERE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN STAFF WORK FOR AUGUST KHARTOUM CONFERENCE. MOREOVER, RAPID SETTLEMENT OF ANY FUTURE BORDER INCIDENT WOULD BE GREATLY FACILITATED BY HIS BEING HERE RATHER THAN IN ADDIS.

6. THERE IS ANOTHER, MORE NEBULOUS REASON WHY WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM BACK. SOME OF THOSE UNFRIENDLY TO US HERE SEE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENT ABSENCE OF ETHIOPIAN AND US AMBASSADORS. IRAQI AMBASSADOR SAID AS MUCH TO CHARGE RECENTLY AFTER COMMENTING ON "STRANGE AND ABRUPT" DEPARTURE OF AMBASSADOR LOORAM.

7. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH CONSIDER APPROACHING ETHIOPIANS TO URGE HIS EARLY RETURN TO POST.
CROMWELL

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